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Soviets tooling up new anti-SDI blitz

By Bill Gertz
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The Soviet Union will launch a "major" propaganda campaign against President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative this year, several top U.S. intelligence experts say.

The Soviets also plan to use the "spirit" of the Geneva summit to obtain U.S. trade and technology, according to "Soviet Active Measures and Disinformation Forecast," a quarterly newsletter scheduled for release today.

The newsletter is edited by Georgetown University professor Roy Godson, who is a consultant to the National Security Council. The newsletter's advisory board includes a number of other intelligence experts, including former Soviet KGB major Stanislav Levchenko.

"Moscow is mounting a major disinformation campaign about its own buildup of strategic defenses," the newsletter says. "To achieve their most important active measures objective in '86 — derailing SDI — Soviet leaders are going to great lengths to conceal their own development both of ground- and space-based capabilities that will become increasingly effective in the 1990s."

"Active measures" and "disinformation" are terms used to describe Soviet overt and covert action operations and propaganda. According to the most recent CIA estimate, the Soviets spend more than \$3.3 billion a year on such operations outside the Soviet Union.

Mr. Godson said in an interview that while the public generally is aware of where the Soviets stand on SDI, many do not understand the underlying Soviet motive for the

propaganda and other activities embodied in Soviet foreign policy maneuvers.

"Nobody has explained why the Soviets oppose SDI," Mr. Godson said. "That's what the Forecast is trying to do."

According to the newsletter, killing SDI would ensure that the Soviets, with a margin of weapons superiority, "will be recognized as the dominant strategic nuclear power in the world in the 1990s."

The Soviets believe U.S. research and testing of defensive arms is a threat since it could lead to produc-

tion and deployment that would curtail Soviet strategic nuclear superiority, the newsletter states.

On the issue of renewed U.S.-Soviet cooperation, Forecast says that Moscow's push for "normalization" of relations is a ploy to restore bilateral relations that existed during the 1970s in the period known as "detente."

The normalization push follows the summit meeting between Mr. Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in November and is promoted under the banner of "the spirit of Geneva," Mr. Godson said.

The recent Moscow meeting between Sen. Edward Kennedy, Massachusetts Democrat, and Mr. Gorbachev, and the impending release of Jewish activist Anatoly

Shcharansky are concrete examples of the campaign to restore detente, Mr. Godson says.

"These things all fit into it," he said.

The most important Soviet benefit from detente, according to Forecast, was the U.S. government's reluctance to criticize the Soviet leadership or provoke Moscow.

"This included refusing to meet Soviet dissidents or raise human rights issues publicly; the absence of public information about Soviet efforts to increase their influence and lack of specific instructions to U.S. diplomats and U.S. Information Agency officials to expose these activities," the newsletter said.

Detente also led to a decrease in U.S. intelligence activities and an increase in Soviet operations, Forecast states.

A former FBI official who was active in counterintelligence affairs said in an interview that the Justice Department declined to prosecute several Soviet espionage cases during the mid-1970s out of fear of damaging bilateral relations.

Efforts to restore detente are likely to end U.S. efforts to engage in "political countermeasures" against Soviet active measures begun by the Reagan administration, according to the newsletter.

"At a time when U.S. leaders were wooing the Soviet leadership it is likely that congressional and bureaucratic forces in Washington would curtail these [political countermeasures] efforts," the report concludes.